General Assembly

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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/57/549)*]

57/177. Situation of older women in society

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the obligations of all States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by the purposes and principles of human rights instruments,

Recalling its resolution 44/76 of 8 December 1989 on elderly women and its resolution 56/126 of 19 December 2001 on the situation of older women in society, Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/23 of 4 May 1982 on elderly women and the World Assembly on Ageing and Council resolutions 1986/26 of 23 May 1986 and 1989/38 of 24 May 1989 on elderly women, and Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/4 of 20 March 1992 on the integration of elderly women into development,[1]

Recalling also the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"[2] and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] in particular their provisions regarding older women,

Reaffirming that the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[4] provide a broad spectrum of social, political and economic recommendations to improve the conditions of older women,

Recognizing that older women outnumber older men, increasingly so with increasing age, and that the situation of older women everywhere must be a priority for policy action,

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 4* (E/1992/24), chap. I, sect. C.

[2] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[4] See *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4).

Aware that in order to ensure full equality between women and men it is essential to recognize the differential impact of ageing on women and men and to integrate a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and legislation,

Aware also that women constitute the majority of older populations in all regions of the world and represent an important human resource whose contribution to society has not been fully recognized,

Recognizing the increasing role of older women in taking the responsibility of providing care and assistance to those infected and affected by the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in various regions of the world, particularly in developing countries,

Affirming the dual challenges of ageing and disability, and affirming also that older persons have specific health needs and that, owing to the increase in life expectancy and the growing number of older women, their health concerns require particular attention and further research,

Aware that few statistics are available on the situation of older women, and recognizing the importance of data, including data disaggregated by age and sex, as an essential element of planning and policy evaluations,

Recognizing that women of all ages, in particular older women, continue to suffer from discrimination and lack of opportunities, including educational opportunities,

Emphasizing that Governments bear the primary responsibility for creating an enabling environment for the economic and social development of their citizens, and noting with appreciation the valuable contributions of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in calling attention to the specific needs of older women,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held at Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002,[4] and the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing,[5] and calls for efforts to implement the global action plan aimed at meeting the challenges of the world's ageing population, in particular with regard to older women;

2. *Stresses* the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective, while continuing to take into account the needs of older women, in policy and planning processes at all levels;

3. *Also stresses* the need to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender and age and ensure equal rights and their full enjoyment for women of all ages;

4. *Urges* Governments and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system in cooperation with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, where appropriate, to promote programmes for healthy active ageing that stress the independence, equality, participation and security of older women and to undertake gender-specific research and programmes to address their needs;

5. *Emphasizes* the need for Governments and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system and the international financial

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institutions, to develop and improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by age and sex;

6. *Welcomes* the adoption in April 2002 by the Valencia Forum of research and academic professionals of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century, to support the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;[4]

7. *Urges* Governments to take measures to enable all older women to be actively engaged in all aspects of life by assuming a variety of roles in communities, public life and decision-making, and to develop and implement policies and programmes in cooperation with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, where appropriate, to ensure that older women can achieve their full enjoyment of human rights and quality of life, with a view to contributing to the realization of a society for all ages;

8. *Calls upon* Governments and the United Nations system to ensure that the needs, perspectives and experiences of older women are reflected in all development policies and programmes;

9. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system and international organizations to consider, in their development planning, the increasing responsibilities of older women in providing care and assistance for those affected by HIV/AIDS;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

77th plenary meeting
18 December 2002